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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600  
28 July 1965

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HIGHLIGHTS

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
A large-scale combined US Marine/ARVN search-and-destroy operation launched today south of Chu Lai near the Quang Tin - Quang Ngai province border has scored initially favorable results (Para. 1). An estimated 62 Viet Cong were reported killed yesterday by government forces in a series of clashes throughout South Vietnam (Para. 2). Meanwhile, enemy activity during the past 24 hours was highlighted by the burning of a government outpost near Saigon, renewed sabotage against Route 19 in the central highlands, and continued skirmishing against US 1st Infantry Division elements at Bien Hoa Air Base (Paras. 3-4). MACV reports that Viet Cong activity during the week 17-24 July continued to reflect a lull in large-scale military operations, as main force units continued to avoid contacts with strong ARVN formations (Para. 7). On the government side, last week's most significant event was the highly successful 12-battalion ARVN road clearing operation along strategic Route 19 in the central highlands; however, except for Route 19, other major highways throughout the country continued to be heavily interdicted by Viet Cong saboteurs (Para. 8). Personnel and weapons losses sustained by ARVN, Viet Cong, and US forces during 17-24 July have been reported (Paras. 9-12).

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## II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

South Vietnam's foreign minister has publicly "welcomed" the US air attacks yesterday on missile sites in North Vietnam (Para. 1). The commanding general of the Saigon military area has complained about the minister of war, General Co, and indicated some resentment of Premier Ky's advisers (Para. 2). Buddhist Tri Quang continues to voice his suspicions of chief of state General Thieu and of Catholic-US intentions in general (Para. 3). The Viet Cong have reportedly scattered anti-US propaganda in the city of Da Nang (Para. 4).

## III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

USAF and USN aircraft continued strikes against barracks, power plants, bridges, and vehicles (Paras. 1-4).

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## V. Communist Political Developments:

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In a new blast at the USSR, Peiping has charged that Soviet aid to the DRV is "miserly" (Para. 2). Soviet Ambassador Zorin has told Western officials in Paris that Moscow continues to support Hanoi's four-point program and further stated that the results of Soviet support for Vietnam will be felt more and more (Para. 3). The Soviet press has denounced the US air attack on 27 July but did not mention the SAM sites (Para. 4).

VI. Other Major Developments: UN Secretary General U Thant is reported as now supporting the participation of the Viet Cong (Liberation Front) in any conference on Vietnam (Paras. 1-2).

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## I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Eleven Viet Cong were killed and ten captured today in the opening phase of a large-scale combined US Marine/ARVN search-and-destroy operation ten miles south of Chu Lai near the Quang Tin - Quang Ngai province border. The operational elements reportedly include more than 500 marines and two ARVN battalions.

2. An estimated 62 Viet Cong were reported killed yesterday in a series of clashes throughout South Vietnam. A two-day sweep operation by ARVN forces in Vinh Long Province, 75 miles south of Saigon, resulted in 29 guerrillas killed. An additional 33 Viet Cong were killed by gunfire from US Army helicopters in Long Khanh and Binh Tuy provinces.

3. Meanwhile, the Viet Cong attacked and burned a government outpost in Gia Dinh Province, 12 miles southeast of Saigon, reportedly inflicting "heavy" losses on government troops in the area. The same outpost had been overrun by the Communists three days ago, at which time its original defense garrison withdrew.

4. In other enemy actions, guerrilla saboteurs reportedly blew up a bridge yesterday along the recently reopened 100-mile stretch of Route 19 between Qui Nhon and Pleiku city. Renewed skirmishing was also reported between Viet Cong forces and forward elements of the 2nd Brigade, 1st US Infantry Division, near Bien Hoa Air Base.

5. MACV's military report for 26 July shows 61 Communist-initiated incidents, eight of which occurred during the 24-hour reporting period. There were no major new actions reported; small-scale terrorism, harassment, and sabotage continued to dominate enemy activity.

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6. Combat air operations were flown by American and Vietnamese aircraft against Viet Cong troop concentrations, base camps, and training and staging areas throughout the four corps tactical zones of South Vietnam on 26 July, with pilots reporting an estimated total of 176 guerrillas killed, 156 structures destroyed and 145 damaged, and five sampans and one cargo ship destroyed. The most productive air strikes of the day were targeted against enemy positions in the Mekong Delta provinces of Kien Tuong, Long An, Kien Phong, An Giang, Chuong Thien, and An Xuyen, where friendly aircraft reportedly killed 121 Viet Cong and destroyed 111 structures and damaged 126 in a series of close air support bombing and strafing missions.

7. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the relative lull in large-scale Viet Cong military operations continued with main force enemy units avoiding contact with strong ARVN formations. The level of Communist-initiated activity increased to 572 incidents from the previous week's total of 480 incidents, but the bulk of these actions reflected the normal pattern of terrorist acts and harassment of isolated units and installations. The only large-scale guerrilla attack was an assault by an estimated two Viet Cong battalions against the Vietnamese Special Forces camp at Bu Dop, in northern Phuoc Long Province, on 20 July.

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8. On the government side, the week's most significant event was a 12-battalion ARVN road-clearing operation along strategic lateral Route 19 from the supply port of Qui Nhon inland to II Corps headquarters at Pleiku. Other major highways throughout South Vietnam continued to be heavily interdicted by Viet Cong saboteurs. Except for Route 19, all major roads leading into the central highlands were closed. Large sections of National Route 1 were impassable in the southern part of I Corps area. Route 15 was closed to civilian and military traffic between Bien Hoa and Vung Tau, and Route 4 was similarly closed between My Tho and Can Tho. Road-clearing operations temporarily opened Route 20 south of Dalat. Meanwhile, the coastal railroad was operable only between Hao Da (Binh Thuan Province) and Nha Trang (Khanh Hoa Province), and between Da Nang and Quang Tri provincial boundary in the I Corps.

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9. A statistical comparison of last week's guerrilla activity with that of the previous week follows:

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>At-tacks</u>	<u>Ter-rorism</u>	<u>Sabotage</u>	<u>Propa-ganda</u>	<u>AA</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
10-17 July	5	332	92	27	24	480
17-24 July	9	403	76	30	54	572

10. ARVN casualties during the period 17-24 July totaled 726 (287 KIA, 316 WIA, and 123 MIA/captured), a slight decline from the previous week's total of 734 casualties (238 KIA, 342 WIA, and 154 MIA/captured). ARVN weapons losses decreased sharply to 159 from the 408 reported lost last week.

11. During 17-24 July, the Viet Cong sustained 791 known casualties (682 KIA and 109 captured), a considerable increase in comparison with the previous week's total of 447 casualties (419 KIA and 28 captured). Government forces captured 238 weapons (five crew-served), in contrast to the 107 weapons (two crew-served) seized last week.

12. US battle casualties during 17-24 July totaled 61 (13 KIA, 46 WIA, and 2 MIA/captured), a decline from last week's total of 99 casualties (16 KIA and 83 WIA). In addition, there were six nonbattle casualties (five deaths and one injury). Last week's total in this category was also six (one death and five injuries). No US weapons losses were reported.

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. South Vietnam's foreign minister, Tran Van Do, is quoted by the press as having said he welcomed the US attack on missile sites in North Vietnam as showing Hanoi that the South Vietnamese people would not be alone in suffering from the war. Do described the air attacks as a "natural reaction" following the loss of a US plane from a ground-to-air missile.

2. Brigadier General Le Nguyen Khang, concurrently marine commander and commander of the Saigon area, is reported to have expressed some criticism of minister of war and chief of the Joint General Staff, Nguyen Huu Co. Khang complained that Co trusted no one, kept major jobs for himself, and put young and inexperienced officers into positions in the Saigon area. Khang also indicated some resentment over Premier Ky's retention of a key adviser from the Quat government, Bui Diem, and Ky's reliance on air force officers. Khang's remarks suggest that he feels he lacks a sufficiently free hand in some matters affecting the Capital Military Region.

[redacted]  
[redacted] Buddhist leader Thich Tri Quang continued to snipe at various government officials, particularly chief of state General Thieu. He alleged that Thieu's two brothers were emerging in key advisory and diplomatic posts, and noted "rumors" that Thieu regards Premier Ky as a puppet whom he will shove aside some day. He continued to link Thieu with alleged Catholic plotting, French influence, and fascist tendencies. [redacted] apparent purpose in requesting a discussion with the embassy officer was to check on other "rumors" that Ambassador-designate Lodge, on his recent trip to Saigon, had met secretly with certain Catholics to plot a future government for South Vietnam.

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4. Unconfirmed press reports state that Viet Cong flags and anti-American leaflets appeared on the streets of Da Nang last night, suggesting an apparent step-up of propaganda against the growing number of American troops in the area.

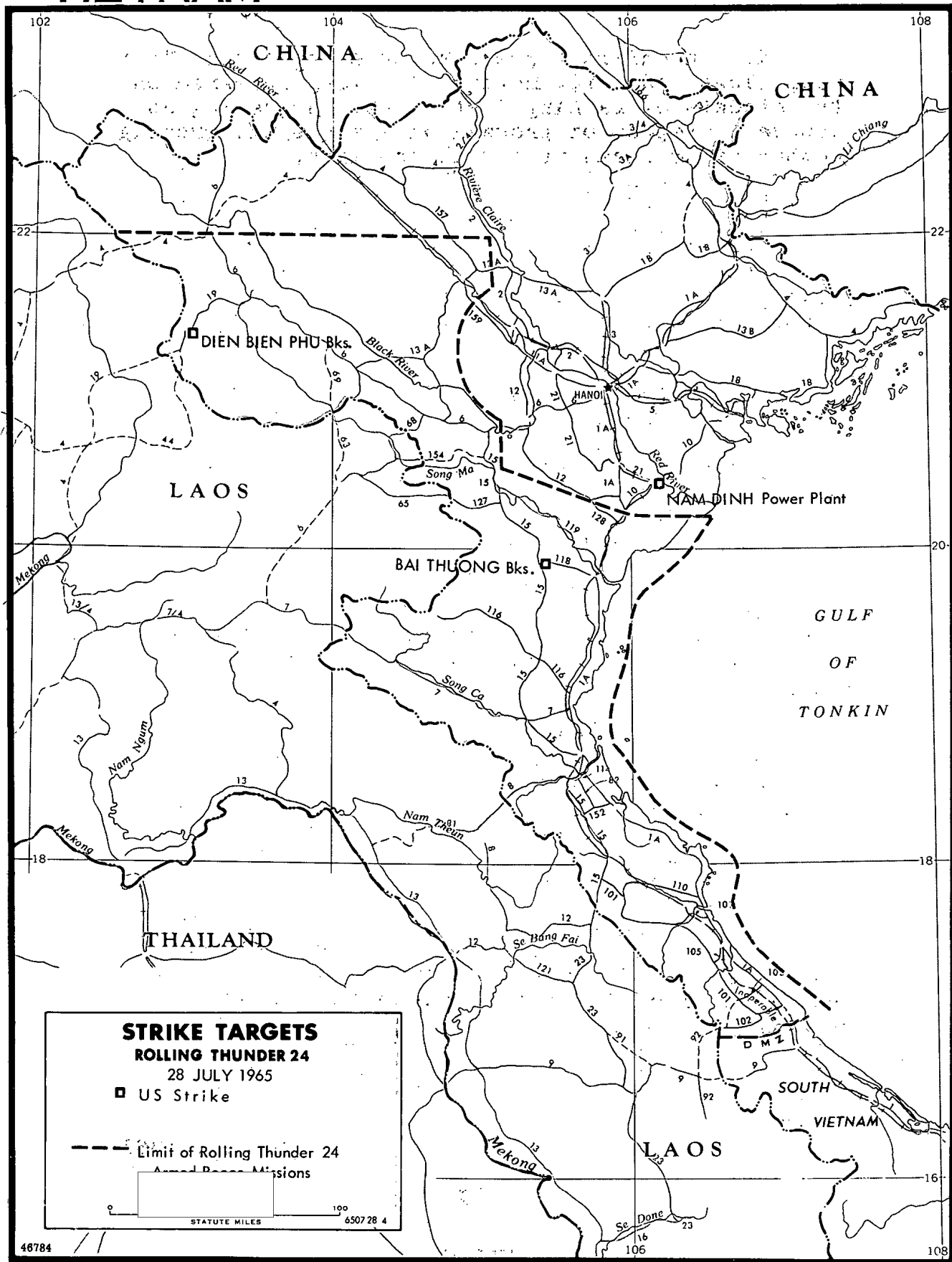
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# NORTH VIETNAM

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### III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. US Air Force and Navy aircraft attacked a number of targets in northwestern and southern North Vietnam on 28 July. Results of the strikes thus far are fragmentary. Two navy aircraft were lost; an A4E was shot down in the vicinity of Route 15, and an F4B crashed into the sea after developing mechanical trouble. The three crewmembers involved in the crashes have all been rescued.

2. Carrier-based navy aircraft attacked the Bai Thuong barracks area and the Nam Dinh power plant. Pilots estimate that three buildings were destroyed and two damaged at Bai Thuong while results of the Nam Dinh strike were obscured by dust and smoke. Pilots reported several direct hits with Bullpup missiles on the Nam Dinh target.

3. Air force F-105 fighter/bombers again attacked the Dien Bien Phu barracks complex. Pilots report destroying ten buildings and damaging seven others. This target has been struck repeatedly since mid-June.

4. Armed reconnaissance missions on 28 July succeeded in destroying some four bridges and damaging at least two others. In addition a number of vehicles were attacked and a secondary explosion was noted from one. Radar bombing attacks were also made on a variety of fixed targets but results are not yet available.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] According to a Japanese press report, on 28 July a "reliable source" close to the Chinese Government questioned whether the "so-called" missile bases in the vicinity of Hanoi and Haiphong had been completed yet and asserted that "it seems rather strange" that the US had not bombed them before now.

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2. The Peiping daily Ta Kung Pao published a new polemical blast at the USSR on 26 July which was broadcast by the NCNA international service the next day. It reiterated standard Chinese attacks on Khrushchev's "revisionist" successors and called their support for North Vietnam "two faced." The article described Soviet aid to the DRV as "miserly" and charged that the Soviets informed the US in advance concerning the assistance Moscow was providing.

3. Moscow's "dour and uncompromising" attitude toward the Vietnam situation has been reflected in recent talks in Paris between Soviet Ambassador Zorin and Western diplomats. He told Canadian representatives on 26 July that Governor Harriman's recent trip to Moscow had "no effect at all" on the deteriorating situation in Vietnam since the US envoy had no new proposals to make. Zorin reiterated Moscow's "full support" for Hanoi's four-point program for a Vietnam settlement, and emphasized that there was no possibility of any sort of talks as long as US air strikes continue. The USSR has publicly pledged its support for Vietnam "in its war of liberation," the Soviet ambassador noted, and the results of this stand will be felt "more and more."

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4. The Soviet government paper Izvestiya on 28 July denounced the US mass air raid yesterday on "densely populated" areas in North Vietnam, but avoided any reference to the US attack on SAM sites northwest of Hanoi. To date the USSR has not referred to this incident. A Pravda dispatch from Washington, apparently anticipating President Johnson's news conference, commented that the US has decided to expand "even further" the land war in South Vietnam, thereby heeding the voice of the Pentagon "rather than the voice of reason."

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VI. OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

1. Japanese Minister of International Trade and Industry Miki has told a US Embassy official in Tokyo that in a recent conversation, UN Secretary General U Thant voiced the opinion that when a conference on Vietnam is held, it should be similar to the one on Laos with all three parties represented, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the Viet Cong. Thant stated that a year ago he would have said that only North and South Vietnam should sit at a conference but that because of the instability in Saigon over the past year he would now recommend separate representation for the Viet Cong.

2. U Thant's view, as reported, marks a considerable gain for Hanoi in its drive for international recognition of the Liberation Front as a partner in any discussions on Vietnam.

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